



Policy Statement



Subject: Blaster Re-Certification training hours and sources

Date: January 22, 1999

Revised: ~~October 26, 2005~~
July 1, 2008

Background: The Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (VSFPC) contains the regulations for the storage, use, manufacture and sale of explosives and blasting agents for construction (outside of mining or quarry operations) in the Commonwealth. The VSFPC also contains the requirement that anyone that loads, fires, or supervises the loading or firing of explosive shots, are to be certified as a "BLASTER" by the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) either as a "Restricted" or "Unrestricted".

All blaster certifications expire 3 years after the date of issuance. Unrestricted Blaster Certification can be renewed when the applicant provides proof of having obtained or accumulated not less than 16 hours of continued training or education in the use of explosives. Restricted Blaster Certification can be renewed when the applicant provides proof of having obtained or accumulated not less than 8 hours of continued training or education in the use of explosives.

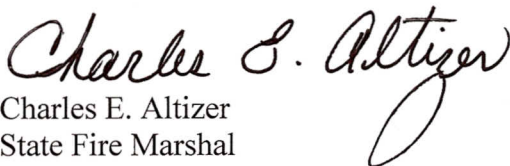
For both Restricted and Unrestricted certifications, in addition to the required criminal history records check, the continued training or education must be obtained during the three years immediately prior to the certificate's published expiration date.

Since before the effective date of the blaster certification requirement, and with the input of industry representatives (*the industry*) on the subject of re-certification hours and in particular, acceptable types and sources of training hours, the industry has effectively stated that *this is something the industry can and should take care of itself*.

Statement: *Acceptable types of training* means any subject related to explosives which can include, but is not limited to: new products, magazine housekeeping, shot design, transportation, safety, packing and unpacking explosives, storage practices, magazine construction, placarding, handling misfires, etc. This can include any information that may be new to the individual(s) or is repetitive. The viewing of videos in and of itself is not acceptable training unless its incorporated into a course of instruction wherein an instructor is available to accurately respond to questions raised from the viewing and correct any outdated information contained in the video.

Acceptable sources of training means from any in-state or out-of-state individual, company, vendor, association or entity that provides or delivers a course of instruction, training or educational session, in a formal or informal setting. This may include, but is not limited to: any Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals & Energy courses; any U.S. Bureau of Mines academy courses; manufacturers (including field representatives); trade associations; vendors for retail or wholesale prices explosives; any state or local government sponsored, sanctioned or hosted training; a company's designate Safety Director who's employment includes a major aspect of ensuring company employees receive all governmental designated or required training and related record keeping of such training; etc., and proven with documentation of attendance and hours. Documents that effectively say, "*this is what I did for myself*" will be judged as not acceptable.

This policy will remain in effect until such time as it is repealed or modified.


Charles E. Altizer
State Fire Marshal